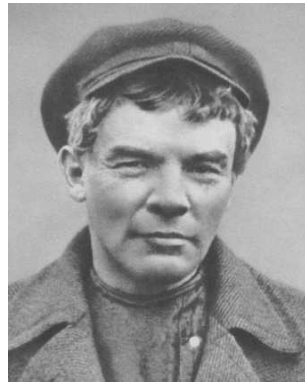


- **Session 1**: Lenin

Text 1-1: Lenin, Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up, 1916, part



Lenin in disguise, 1917

Consequences of Imperialist War

The origin of the Age of Imperialism, when it became dominant in the world, were the Imperial wars at the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries, and most typically the Anglo-Boer War.

The Anglo-Boer War is the most typical of the original, because it showed most clearly what the nature of the new capitalist Imperialism was. Britain made war on the Boer Republics, not so as to rule them directly, and certainly not to liberate the black people living under those racist regimes, but only to possess the gold mines and other such assets as they might wish to have.

The recent Imperialist war on Libya is not different in overall nature.

The typical tactic of Imperialism is not direct colonialism, but indirect, neo-colonialism. As the 20th century went on, the obligations that went with direct rule were abandoned. As a counter to the National Democratic Revolutions, neo-colonialism was increasingly substituted for the older system of direct colonial rule.

This much was described by Lenin in the text that went with the previous post in this series. Lenin paid close attention to the question of Imperialism and wrote a lot about it during this time. It may be helpful for us to look briefly at the general situation before 1916, and thereafter.

The Great Powers had gone to war in 1914, as a consequence of the tensions that Imperialism had brought with it, in a finite, limited world that had been divided between them, but unevenly.

The Workers' (Second) International had, instead of opposing the war, collapsed. The socialist parties of the contending powers had nearly all opted to support their different bourgeois governments in the terrible mutual slaughter and destruction.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks refused to support the war. They formed the major force in the small “Zimmerwald” International, together with other formations that wanted to maintain the international working-class position of opposition to capitalist war.

By that time Lenin had been in exile for many years. He returned from Switzerland to Russia in April, 1917, a few weeks after the February revolution of that year.

In “The Nascent Trend of Imperialist Economism” (attached), Lenin attacks the “Imperialist Economism” that is against the right to self-determination and against democracy.

Imperialist Economism has *“the knack of persistently ‘sliding’ from recognition of imperialism to apology for imperialism (just as the Economists of blessed memory slid from recognition of capitalism to apology for capitalism),”* says Lenin.

“Economism” is Syndicalism, or in South African parlance, “Workerism”. It is the belief that trade union struggles alone can solve the problems of the working class. It is reformist, and it relies upon the promises of development of the capitalist economy, with no plans to overthrow it.

“Imperialist Economism” took the reformist logic one step further, to say that Imperialism should be allowed to develop to its fullest, in the belief that when the whole world had become one big monopoly, it could simply be taken over and re-named socialism. The Imperialist Economists promoted the idea that socialism was the end-destination of the Imperialist bus-ride, and that all that was necessary was to get on the bus and encourage Imperialism’s progress, in the name of socialism.

The German Social-Democrat Karl Kautsky, who Lenin called a “renegade”, and “no better than a common liberal”, became the prophet of Imperialist Economism.

In the face of this particular brand of treacherous liquidationism, Lenin was obliged to re-state the necessity for the right of nations to self-determination (see the second attached item). This is a longer document. In it, early on, under the heading “Socialism and the Self-Determination of Nations”, Lenin wrote: *“We have affirmed that it would be a betrayal of socialism to refuse to implement the self-determination of nations under socialism.”*

So as not to make this introduction too long, let us sum up:

- There is no final separation between socialism and internationalism (“Workers of the World, Unite!”) but
- Nations have the right of self-determination

Using the next item we will see the consequence of this struggle of ideas, as it affected the world after the Russian Revolution, and after the Imperialist world war of 1914 -1918 was over. We will see that Lenin personally, and the Communist International in particular, were able to map out the line of march for the National Democratic Revolutions that subsequently liberated most of the planet, including, eventually, South Africa, from direct colonialism.



Genesis of the NDR

The Hammer and Sickle emblem of the communists was invented in Russia in 1917. It is a symbol of class alliance between two distinct classes: proletarian workers, and peasants.

Peasants often work hard and they are often poor, but they are not the same as the working proletariat of the towns. Nor are they the same as the rural proletariat. So the hammer and the sickle are not two identical things. They represent two different things, allied.

Practical politics is always a matter of alliance, and in different circumstances, different alliances are called for. Communists commonly regard an alliance between workers and peasants as normal. Proletarian parties have likewise, in the past, often attempted class alliances with (other) parts of the bourgeoisie against feudalism, or against colonialism.

Alliances are normal and necessary, in order to isolate and thereby to defeat an adversary, and equally, to avoid being isolated and defeated by that adversary. Therefore, the question of the appropriate alliances in the anti-colonial and anti-Imperialist struggle was bound to arise.

The origin of the specific type of class alliance that is nowadays referred to by the term **National Democratic Revolution** can be precisely located in the Second Congress of the Communist International (2CCI), in the discussion in the Commission on the National and Colonial Question, reported to the plenary by V. I. Lenin on 26 July 1920 (attached).

The first, founding Congress of the Communist International ("Comintern") had taken place in March, 1919, a little over a year after the October 1917 Russian Revolution. It fulfilled the tenth of Lenin's "April Theses": *"We must take the initiative in creating a revolutionary International"*.

The very first "International Working Men's Association", of which Karl Marx had been a founder member in 1864, had been disbanded in 1871 after the fall of the Paris Commune.

The Second International fell apart in 1914, when most of the Social-Democratic workers' parties backed the bourgeois masters of war in the conflict between the Imperialist powers.

The communists, led by Lenin, had held out against that betrayal. After the revolutionary victory in Russia they lost very little time before constructing a Third, Communist International. It was naturally and explicitly anti-Imperial and anti-colonial and decisively so at its Second Congress (the "2CCI") in 1920.

In his report to the 2CCI on the National and Colonial Question, Lenin says:

*“We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the **national-revolutionary movement** rather than of the ‘bourgeois-democratic’ movement. It is beyond doubt that any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consist of **peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships**... However, the objections have been raised that, if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movements. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries...”*

Here we find, for the first time, all the makings of the NDR, including the name, even if the words are not quite in their present-day order. Lenin calls it “national-revolutionary”, but he makes it very clear that he is talking of a democratic class alliance with anti-colonial, anti-Imperialist elements of the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries.

The 2CCI was followed within two months by the famous “[Congress of the Peoples of the East](#)”, in Baku, in the southern part of what was soon to become the Soviet Union. This was the first international anti-colonial conference. It had huge consequences. The remainder of the 20th century was marked by world-wide National Democratic Revolutions according to the pattern set by Lenin and his international comrades.

These National Democratic Revolutions included, and still include, the South African NDR.

Text 1-3: Lenin, Marxism and Insurrection, 1917



Guerrilla Warfare

Just after the first Russian Revolution of January, 1905, Lenin wrote “Guerrilla Warfare” (attached). Almost immediately in this work, Lenin plants his experienced revolutionary feet on solid revolutionary ground, thus:

“Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle.

"It recognizes the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not "concoct" them, but only generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement.

"Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crisis become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack.

"Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognizing as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation changes. In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim whatever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by 'systematisers' in the seclusion of their studies."

Later in the same work, in which he defends the Latvian comrades who have taken up some forms of armed struggle, Lenin says:

"... such an objection would be a purely bourgeois-liberal and not a Marxist objection, because a Marxist cannot regard Civil War, or guerrilla warfare, which is one of its forms, as abnormal and demoralizing in general.

"A Marxist bases himself on the class struggle, and not social peace. In certain periods of acute economic and political crisis the class struggle ripens into a direct Civil War, i.e., into an armed struggle between two sections of the people. In such periods a Marxist is obliged to take the stand of Civil War. Any moral condemnation of Civil War would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism."

Are you worrying about what form your struggle should take? Read this document, comrades.

- **Session 2:** War and Peace

Text 2-1: Pomeroy, On the Time for Armed Struggle, 1974



Military and Political

Presuming that we have by now established that we are not pacifists, but are revolutionaries who intend, by any means necessary, to assist the working class to expropriate the expropriator bourgeois class, which by itself is a violent act: Then why can we not move with speed, and without any restraint, towards an armed overthrow of the oppressors?

The late William “Bill” Pomeroy started his essay “On the Time for Armed Struggle” (linked below) from exactly this point of departure, like this:

“Because of the decisive results that can follow from an armed smashing of the main instruments of power held by a ruling class or a foreign oppressor, some of those who acquire a revolutionary outlook are eager to move to the stage of armed struggle; and their concept of it as the highest form of revolutionary struggle causes them to cast discredit upon other forms as 'less advanced', as amounting to collaboration with or capitulation to the class enemy.”

But, he wrote:

“Too often the aura of glory associated with taking up arms has obscured hard prosaic truths and realities in the interplay of forces in a period of sharp struggle.”

And later on, Pomeroy adds:

“The experiences of the revolutionary movement in the Philippines offer an interesting example of the complex, varied and fluctuating processes that may occur in a liberation struggle.”

Pomeroy writes that *“analysis and understanding of the revolutionary experiences of others is indispensable”*. He proceeds to offer his own rich and extraordinary experience as a military combatant and revolutionary. His main lesson is that the military must never think that it can cease to be subordinate to the political. Such thinking is bound to bring disaster, as it did in the Philippines.

Not only is the military subordinate to the political in the hierarchical sense that the military takes its orders from the political leadership and reports back to it. It is more than that. The revolutionary movement goes away from military, and towards political, essentially peaceful means. Far from armed struggle being the “highest form”, it is a form of struggle that we do not adopt unless it is forced upon us, and we pursue it, if we have to, with the main aim of returning as quickly as possible to political means.

This is not only a revolutionary political principle. It is also, in terms of the best military theory (that of Clausewitz) a military principle that force of arms can only serve to return the parties to the negotiating table. That is all it can do; and if it fails to do this much, then military force is simply a disaster.

The picture shows William and Celia Pomeroy, next to a newspaper report about their incarceration in the course of the Philippines struggle. William Pomeroy passed away on 12 January 2009 and Celia Pomeroy passed away on 22 August 2009.

Text 2-2: Le Duan, Political and Military Forces in Revolutionary War, 1967



Ho Chi Minh and Le Duan

Political and Military in Revolutionary War

[Le Duan](#)'s "Political and Military in Revolutionary War" is a short, powerful piece of writing that manages to include a great deal of wisdom in a few words.

Le Duan says, confirming Pomeroy:

"... the close combination of political and military struggle constitutes the basic form of revolutionary violence in South Vietnam"

It is hard to introduce such an article as this except to say that it is an example of communist simplicity, brevity and clarity that can hardly be beaten. It is ideal for study circles. If necessary, such an article as this can be read out loud, and serve as its own introduction. It is a good example to anyone, of how to reproduce your theory in plain terms that workers and peasants can understand, without losing any of its quality.

Le Duan even manages to mention the National Democratic Revolution in an educational manner, thus:

*"Like the **national-democratic revolution** all over the country in the past, the present South Vietnamese revolution has the workers and peasants as its main force and the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class as the cornerstone of the national united front."*

A small [archive of Le Duan's writing](#) can be found on MIA.

Text 2-3: Teitelboim, Popular Unity Rule, 1977



Dedan Kimathi, 1920-1957

The Armed People

The practical alternative to the State that appeared in Paris in the beginning of 1871 was not only the right of recall and the whole people collectively in power and in perpetual session. It was also the reappearance of the Armed People in a new kind of societal framework. So-called Primitive Communism is an Armed People. Here, in the Paris Commune, was an Armed People in advanced productive circumstances.

The security forces - army and police - that had existed before the Paris Commune had been paid to support the bourgeois State and to guarantee the State's survival by suppressing, whenever necessary, the working class. These forces were disbanded and not replaced. With hardly any exceptions, all "separations of powers" were abolished in the Paris Commune, leaving only one power: The Armed People.

In Chile, in the time of the Popular Unity government that fell on 11 September 1973, instead of an Armed People, a virtue was made of disarmament, and a "Peaceful Path" was worshipped as the new political Golden Calf.

Volodia Teitelboim, in the first document attached and linked below, gives a brief description, as one of those who was involved, of Chile's Popular Unity government and its disastrous end at the hands of traitor fascists who used the national army to overthrow it. It was a shocking reminder of the purpose of the "special bodies of armed men" of the bourgeois state.

Teitelboim calls for "A Reappraisal of the Issue of the Army," meaning a return to the view of the Paris Commune, which is mentioned in the first line. This document of Teitelboim's is sufficient as the basis for a very good and necessary discussion.

The next featured text will be the ANC's original Strategy and Tactics document of 1969. This document unashamedly embraces armed struggle, and not any starry "Peaceful Path".

Like the Chilean Popular Unity government, ours is a multiclass government underpinned by a class alliance for common goals. It is a unity-in-action, otherwise called a popular front.

Why have we in South Africa survived after 16 years, while the Chileans did not survive after only 1,000 days?

The answer could be that we are not pacifists. Or, the answer could be that our crisis has not arrived yet. Or, that we have passed at least one crisis (e.g. in mid-2008, resolved by the recall of President Mbeki and the resignation of various ministers including Terror Lekota and Mluleki George), which may not yet be the last.

South Africans were in this case in advance of the historic crisis that manifested in Chile. Four years prior to the Pinochet coup in Chile overthrew the Popular Unity government led by Salvador Allende, the Morogoro Conference of the ANC had laid down the necessity for the armed defence of the revolution. We look at this in the next instalment.

- **Session 3:** The Struggle is Ours

Text 3-1: F Castro, 30 years after Angola and 49 after Granma, 2003



Jorge Risquet Valdés Saldaña

Liberation Struggle

In political education, our method is to remove ourselves in place and time. We go to the “classics” and to authors of the intermediate period, and we study other places, in the past or in the present.

All of these provide us with examples. The examples provide us with a theoretical and practical “sandpit” that gives us a “codification” or in other words a basis upon which we may have a dialogue.

Dialogue is where political education happens. Anything that can provide an occasion for political dialogue is good for education.

Our own history can be used, but what do we find? When looking for history of our liberation struggle, and the history of the armed struggle in particular, we find very little. The materials about the culminating struggle in Angola assembled below will have to suffice for now. They can also serve as a small contribution towards recognising the Cuban and Soviet comrades who fought faithfully and often fell for us, until victory came.

Vladimir Shubin has written and published two books in English: “**ANC: A View from Moscow**” and “**The Hot 'Cold War': The USSR in Southern Africa**”. These books are presently available from bookshops in South Africa, or they can be ordered via the Internet.

The Soviet record of events does not correspond in every respect with the Cuban record, and this contrast would force the readers or students to make judgements of their own, as to what was really the critical path that led to the final political result, which was victory in Angola, Namibia and South Africa. Let us hope to find a suitable Soviet or Russian article in electronic form before this course gets run again.

Fidel Castro has written a lot. Linked below, as our main item, is the speech he made on 2 December 2005, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the first Cuban expeditionary force to Angola, which became what the US Imperialist diplomat Chester Crocker called an “unprecedented projection of power”.

Jorge Risquet Valdés Saldaña, fighter, negotiator, and currently member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, has written (in Spanish) “**El Segundo frente del Che en el Congo**” (ISBN

959-210-412-3, Casa Editorial Abril, 2006) – the history of the Patrice Lumumba Battalion, in which Risquet served. The picture above is of the same Jorge Risquet, a great and brave hero, also famous for his friendliness and *joie-de-vivre*.

Text 3-2, Dixon, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the worst ever terror attacks, 2005



Hiroshima

Hiroshima and Nagasaki

To underline the ruthlessness of the Imperialist enemy, we can quote as follows:

“the US decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ... was meant to kick-start the Cold War [against the Soviet Union, Washington's war-time ally] rather than end the Second World War”.

This statement is taken from Norm Dixon's article “Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Worst terror attacks in history” published in Green Left Weekly, August 3, 2005 (attached; download linked below).

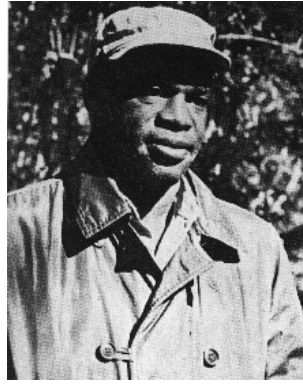
The two worst-ever terrorist attacks in history, by far, were perpetrated by the USA, for the most cynical and mendacious reasons.

Images of what resulted in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are abundantly available on the Internet but the ones that show people, whether alive or dead, are too terrible to use here.

To this day the USA does not face up to what it has done by these two vile acts.

This course is on Anti-Imperialism, War and Peace. We cannot leave this thing out. We have to note that the US power that did these unspeakable things is still active in the world, and is still, as it was then, active in the cause of its own dominance over the rest of us. The list of its crimes continues to grow longer every day.

Text 3-3: Shivji, The Struggle for Democracy, 2003



[Eduardo Mondlane, 1920-1969](#)

Democracy is Ours

This part is the second last in the present series on Anti-Imperialism, Peace, and Socialism. This part is designed to invite comrades to reflect upon the place of the anti-Imperialist struggle within the entirety of world history.

That is why Issa Shivji's address on **The Struggle for Democracy and Culture** (linked below) is used. It explicitly and correctly claims, on behalf of the national-liberation and anti-colonial struggle, that for the time being this struggle carries the banner of progress for the whole world.

For a long time past, and into the future, until such time as the struggle for socialism itself becomes once again the principal one, the National Democratic Revolutions taken together constitute the main vehicle for human progress, bearing and rescuing all that is noble and fine in humanity.

The bourgeoisie is a thieving class and it will steal the clothes of the revolutionaries without any hesitation if it sees the smallest, or the most temporary, advantage in doing so. The Imperialist bourgeoisie wishes to reverse the appearance of its shameful past and of its hopeless future. It wishes to claim the moral superiority that the liberation movement has, and steal it.



[Frantz Fanon, 1925-1961](#)

Issa Shivji, the revolutionary Dar-es-Salaam intellectual, shows very clearly how the monstrous fraud is attempted. The constant droning about "good governance" is the extreme of hypocrisy, coming as it does from the worst oppressors in history, the force that has taken oppression to the ends of the earth – Imperialism. Read Shivji. He tells it well. But also note the hypocritical machinations of our present South African anti-communists, including but not limited to the DA. If you did not know better, you could start to believe from what you read that it was liberal whites who liberated South Africa from the old regime.



[Issa Shivji](#)

The struggle for democracy is ours, not theirs. The struggle for freedom is ours. We are the humanists now. We, the liberationists, are the principal creators of human history and we have been for many decades past. The 20th Century was the liberation century and the first anti-Imperial century. That was when we overtook the others in politics, in morality, and in philosophy - but we were only starting.

In the 21st Century we will finish the job, and finish with Imperialism altogether.

Themes:

- International solidarity is a revolutionary question and not a “human rights” question.
- The drive for independence and national sovereignty is based on the right of nations to self-determination.
- Nations are class entities. The modern nations have been created by the bourgeois class. The same idea of the nation is being subverted by the bourgeois class. Both contradictory processes continue, simultaneously.
- “Colonialism of a Special Type” is the normal type of colonialism. Colonies become bourgeois states when the working class is given citizenship, and thereby becomes a working proletariat.
- The National Democratic Revolution is an anti-imperialist revolutionary tactic, originating in the Communist International in 1920. It is a class alliance, and its operative feature is mass democratic organisation.
- Armed struggle is always subordinate to political struggle, but political struggle without regard to armed struggle will fail.
- Anti-Imperialism has a history. Each country has its own history. The Anti-Imperialism is also the nature of the age. Each country will continue to struggle with Imperialism until such time as Imperialism is fully defeated and permanently crushed out of existence. South Africa’s struggle with Imperialism is not yet finished.
- Solidarity cannot be organised without mass democratic structures. Solidarity has to be powered by the self-active solidarity of democratically-organised masses. Solidarity will never succeed by the action of bourgeois “civil society” and NGOs.